



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局 **KASTAM SINGAPURA** சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

MEDIA RELEASE

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ASEAN Directors-General of Customs meet in Singapore

The 22nd ASEAN Directors-General of Customs Meeting started this morning in Singapore.

The meeting is an annual forum that provides strategic guidance and policy direction for all customs cooperation activities in ASEAN. Customs integration is one of the key initiatives that contribute to ASEAN's goal of establishing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2015.

Singapore's Head of Civil Service and Permanent Secretary (Finance), Mr Peter Ong, officiated at the opening of the meeting.

In his opening address, Mr Ong noted ASEAN's progress in economic growth and integration in recent years, in which the region continues to be an engine of growth with a contribution of about 40 per cent of global growth in 2012.

He emphasised the important role of Customs in facilitating trade both internationally and at the ASEAN level, citing as an example of the launch of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which is the expansion of ASEAN's free trade agreements (FTAs) network with non-ASEAN countries, and that virtually all goods traded in ASEAN can now flow throughout the region tariff-free.

Mr Ong also highlighted the critical role played by ASEAN customs administrations in achieving the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) vision. "With significant tariff reductions progressively being realised, trade facilitation will become the next important area to enable intra- and inter-ASEAN trade to grow," he said.

"In addition to tariff elimination, member states have made commitments in multiple areas to achieve free flow of goods in ASEAN. These areas include non-tariff barriers, responsive rules of origin, trade facilitation, customs integration, and the ASEAN Single Window," Mr Ong said. "ASEAN customs administrations play a critical role in all these areas."

About 90 delegates, including customs officials from the ASEAN countries and representatives from the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC), the Conference of Asia-Pacific Express Carriers (CAPEC), and the ASEAN Federation of Forwarders Associations (AFFA), are attending the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs Meeting.

Over the next three days, the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs will discuss the progress of ASEAN customs integration and review the work of various ASEAN customs working groups.

These include the Coordinating Committee on Customs, chaired by the Philippines; the Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation Working Group, chaired by Singapore; the Customs Enforcement and Compliance Working Group, chaired by Malaysia; the Customs Capacity Building Working Group, chaired by Brunei; and the ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee, chaired by the Philippines.

On the second and third days of the meeting, a series of consultation sessions will be held with the customs administrations of China, Japan and Korea, and the World Customs Organisation. A joint consultation session will also be held with CAPEC, USABC and AFFA. These consultations will strengthen the customs-to-customs and customs-to-business partnerships in the region.

ASEAN countries take turns to host the annual meeting. Singapore last hosted the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs Meeting in 2002.

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ANNEX



Singapore's Head of Civil Service and Permanent Secretary (Finance), Mr Peter Ong (7th from left), with the ASEAN Directors-General of Customs at the opening of the 22nd ASEAN Directors-General of Customs Meeting today.



Singapore's Head of Civil Service and Permanent Secretary (Finance), Mr Peter Ong, giving the opening address.